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ABSTRACT

The major way teachers can motivate students to read is to be avid readers themselves. They need to read current young adult books to keep up with frequently changing trends. Preparing short book lists and giving book talks are other effective ways of encouraging students to read. Teachers might use a number of activities in place of book reports to encourage reading, including having students write a diary the main character of a book might have written, fashion a mobile from items related to the book, prepare a sample television commercial to sell a book, decorate a book jacket, or discuss how one might deal with a situation in a book if it occurred in real life. A number of sources of reviews of young adult literature exist, including "English Journal," "Books for the Teenage," and "ALA Best Book List." Using television and movie tie-ins with books is another way to encourage young adults to read. (TJ)

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MAKING BOOKS IRRESISTIBLE:

Ways to Bring Kids, Books, and Teacher Together.

Donald J. Kenney

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All educators, and especially librarians and English teachers, ideally would like to see every student reading at least one book per week. Our job, and our ultimate goal in instilling the love of books into the hearts of all students and sending every graduate out into the world of work who comes home to relax in front of a blazing fire on a cold, frigid wintry evening to read Joyce's Ulysses or Shakespeare's Henry V, or some long, forgotten little volume of 18th Century poetry, unfortunately, is not readily achieveable anytime soon - anytime this century as a matter of fact. What we dream for and idealize about the literaty taste of our students and the future citizens of tommorrow are not within our grasp Librarians' and English teachers' attitudes about reading and literary taste have changed drastically in the last decade and must continue to change to accomodate the fact that not every high school student is going to be an insatiable consumer of Dickens, Thackery, and Conrad.

Admittedly at best, our jobs as English teachers and librarians are formidable. Our high school and college graduates do not go on to read Dickens' Pickwick Papers, or Crime and Punishment as bedside reading. More typically their reading will consist of Ladies Home Journal, Sports Illustrated, and T.V. Guide, the daily newspaper, and the back of cereal boxes. We have become a visual society tied to the television and the world of advertising. We do not want to read anything that might take more than five minutes, ten at the most, of our time. What then can we, librarians and teachers, who have been charged with the duty of instilling the love of books into the lives of students, enriching their lives with the great works of would literature, and last, but not least of all, preparing students to do minimum reading on

competency exams, do to make avid readers of students? In order to carry out any personal goals of "turning your students on to reading," or just getting your students to read a book once a month or whatever your goal is to bring kids and books together requires a great deal of motivation.

Survey after survey reveals that reading taste of teenagers has not changed drastically in the last few decades. Teenagers still prefer reading mysteries, animals, adventure, and love stories. Science fiction/fantasy and social problem books are very popular. Fiction is still preferred to non-fiction perhaps showing that today's teenagers prefer escapist literature. Knowing these facts about their preferences should help librarians and English teachers to guide students in their reading as well as motivating them. A key factor to "turning on kids to reading" is motivating them to read. Students need to be surrounded with books - exhibits of books, posters, bookmarks, and assorted handouts. The major portion of my presentation, then, is going to deal with motivating students to read by showing your own interest in reading and preparing materials to motivate them.

Motivating Students to Read

Show students that you are interested in reading by being an avid reader yourself. Let students see you reading-both adult and young adult books. Talk about what you read, being specific in relating incidents, why or why not a book or an author is good. Be able, and only if you are widely read can you provide this service, to offer suggestions to students of books to read. Only by reading current young adult novels can you be aware of what is topically or themetically of interest to students. Drugs might be the

in topic one year but alcoholism has replaced it the next. Be willing to provide some free reading time in class for students as well as showing filmstrips, T. V. book talks, and playing records and tapes that are relevant to young adult literature.

Surround the students with interesting posters, book displays, book packets, and students' projects relating to books. Bring book clubs such as AEP, Campus, and TAP to the attention of the students and actively encourage them to participate in these clubs. If you make specific assignments connected with books, that is, the book report idea, do one yourself. Doing the assignment as a model often encourages the reluctant readers and can stimulate all students when you share your project.

Suggested Reading

In preparing suggested reading lists, avoid giving the students long ones. Rather, do short reading lists but do them more frequently. Also, vary the format of these lists by using a list on a bookmark, in a newsletter format, or series of catalog cards. These can easily be produced on a ditto or copier machine. Having an attractive format is important to get students attention as well as gratifying to look at. Reading lists should always include books that appeal to a broad group of students yet might center on a theme such as "survival" books, or a type such as "animal" or "mystery" books.

Book Talks

I have already mentioned talking about books to your students, and this, of course, is an informal approach that one can use. On the other hand, there is the book talk approach that you can develop. Again, using book talks, and please do not think this approach is too elementary because

it is widely used by public libraries, radio and television to reach adults, is another varied method to get students excited about books. Here are some tips on presenting a book talk that deals with selecting a book or theme and the actual presentation.

Selection of Book(s) and/or Theme

1. Select books or themes that interest you. Lack of interest and enthusiasm will show through your presentation.
2. Consider suitability to age and cultural group. Does the author have wide appeal for both boys and girls? Does the book have a limited reading ability?
3. Select themes or books that tie in with the curriculum or somehow are suitable for holidays, celebrations, or other special events.

Presentation

1. A good book talk "wets the listeners' appetites." A good reviewer does not give too many details about the book(s).
2. Information about the author, other books by the author, and the author's background, qualifications, and reasons for writing the book should be included.
3. Repeat author(s) and titles(s) several times and hold book(s) up to pin down the attention of the audience.
4. Use visual aids such as maps, or pictures when they can clarify and add to the presentation.
5. Allow discussion or questions only after completion of the book talk.
6. Individual handouts to students give added interest to the talk.

A list of the books included in the book talks or similar books can be on a handout or bookmark. A crossword or acrostics puzzle might also be used. (Give these out at conculsion of talks).

7. If presenting a thematic talk, have enough books for everyone. You can include related books that are not directly used in the presentation.
8. Confine the book talk to 15-20 minutes.
9. Vary your visibility by sitting and standing or even moving around to prevent talk from becoming to pedanic.
10. To encourage critical thinking about literature, use that approach in the book talk. Make critical statements about the books. This also will indicate that you have read the book(s) and, therefore, will be more persuasive in getting students to read.
11. Practic[illegible]e book talk so you can deliver the book(s) in a talking fashion.
12. Read selections from books, even the book jackets if the talk covers many books.
13. In talking about an individual book focus on one character, the setting, the theme, or the plot. However, avoid a synposis of the entire book.

Instead of a Book Report

Traditionally the book report has served as a teacher's method of checking-up on students' reading. Not only do students find book reports tedious, but teachers dislike grading them. Book reports too often have a negative effect on students' reading rather than encouraging them to read.

If teachers feel the need for students to do some type of project with books read, perhaps instead of a book report try some of the following assignments:

1. Write a story in a book from a different point of view.
2. Write the diary a main character might have written.
3. Discuss the major character in a book in terms of whether or not you would like to know that person.
4. Rearrange a passage from a book as a "found" poem.
5. Write a letter to a friend recommending a book.
6. Fashion a mobile from items related to a book.
7. Construct a miniature stage setting for part of a story.
8. Discuss one new idea about people and their lives that you got from a book.
9. Compare and contrast 2 characters from 2 different books.
10. Write a letter to a character in the book in which you react to something that character said or did.
11. Write a report of related information about one topic or person in a book.
12. Prepare a sample TV commercial to sell a favorite book.
13. Decorate a book jacket.
14. Select the most humorous incident, the most exciting, the most unusual, etc. and give reasons for these choices.
15. Discuss an incident, a character, or a place that was as important to you as an incident, character or place in the book was to the main character.
16. Discuss how you would deal with a situation in a book if you

had to face it in your life.

17. Write a character sketch of someone in a book.
18. Write a letter to Dear Abby as a person with the same problem as a character in a book. Answer the letter.
19. Write a promotion campaign for a movie about a book.
20. Advertise a book by making posters, flat or three dimensional.
21. Create a scene in which the main characters from two books meet.

Sources of Reviews of Young Adult Literature

One of the most important aspects of providing stimulation to getting students to read is your own familiarity with young adult literature. You cannot recommend books to students unless you have read them. And, with this body of literature changing constantly, especially thematically, it is essential to read as many of the books as you can. Not only can you talk and recommend books that you specifically have read but your knowledge of themes and authors will provide you with a reference point in recommending books. Certainly, you cannot read the hundreds of books published each year so the best next alternative is to read reviews to keep on top of current trends. The best sources for reviews as well as critical articles about young adult literature are some of these.

1. English Journal NCTE publication - published monthly Sept.-May
   The regular, monthly column, "Books for Young Adults," is an excellent source of reviews or young adult literature. The once-a-year young adult book poll conducted by G. Robert Carlsen reviews the reading choices of high school students and reveals the changing taste of young adults from year to year. This poll is especially revealing about the reading tast of senior high school students.

2. Language Arts NCTE publication

   Published monthly September-May

   The monthly column, "Book re-Marks," is a good source of reviews of books for younger students.

3. Instructor

   Published monthly September-May

   Instructor is another good source of reviews for younger students. This periodical occasionally features topic bibliographies and in the spring reviews the best new books.

4. Media & Methods

   Published monthly September-May

   This periodical, though basically a non-book one, often reviews the latest paperback books. It is also a good source of film and television programs that tie in with books.

5. Wilson Library Bulletin

   Published monthly September-June

   The regular column, "For the Young Adult," reviews new books.

6. Books for the Teenage, published by the New York Public Library

   This is a list of books, revised annually, on subjects of special interest and appeal to teenagers.

7. ALA Best Book List

   Published annually, lists the best books of each year chosen by Young Adults Services Division's Best Book Committee of the ALA.

8. Your Reading, A Booklist for Junior High Students, NCTE publication, 1975.

9. Books for You, A Booklist for Senior High Students, NCTE publication, 1976.

10. Book Clubs

a) Scholastic

Teenage book club (TAB, grades 7-9) and Campus Book Club (grades 10-12) provide fliers each month listing and describing books offered that month.

b) AEP

General monthly listing of books, with teaching guides and other support materials.

11. ALAN (Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of the National Council of Teachers of English), Fall, Winter and Spring.

12. School Library Journal published by R. R. Bowker Co., Monthly September-May.

Your library probably subscribes to this journal since it is a basic bibliographical tool for librarians. However, it contains many articles that are of interest to English teachers. There are usually lots of articles and cited cases of censorship. of particular interest is the column, "In the YA Corner," that focuses on adolescent literature.

13. The Horn Book Magazine

Again, this is another basic library tool for librarians and is probably in you school library. The reviews are good in that they are long enough to give you a good idea of the book's content and worth.

Movie and Television Tie-Ins

Both television and movies still captivate teenagers. With the increased pressure for television programming to improve a number of excellent television productions based on young adult novels have been produced. Keeping abreast

of these television productions and movies is another device to stimulate students' interest in reading. Good discussions can also result in comparing the book to the television production or the movie, as well as leading to exploring other similar books, authors, or themes. Some recent television productions and movies based on young adult novels are:

WHERE THE RED FERN GROWN (Wilson Rawls), THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY (Michael Crichton), THE HIDING PLACE (Corri ten Boom), CORNBREAD, EARL AND ME (Ronald L. Fair), BAKER'S HAWK (Jack Bickham), ROLL OF THUNDER, HEAR MY CRY (Mildred Taylor), SUMMER OF MY GERMAN SOLDIER (Bette Greene), ARE YOU IN THE HOUSE ALONE? (Richard Peek, and LIKE MOTHER, LIKE ME (Shelia Schwartz).

Bringing kids and books together is the most significant job English teachers have to perform, and at the same time, it is the most difficult one. Understanding what teenagers are reading is necessary in order for teachers to be persausive in generating further interest in reading and getting relunctant students to read. By being avid readers teachers are in a better position to demonstrate to students, not only the necessity of reading, but the joy of being an avid reader. Providing various experiences and activities in the classroom insures that students will know the value you as a teacher place on reading.